1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

platform raised above the ground on wooden legs about 3 feet high, and consisting of a rectangular wooden frame from 5 to 7 feet long by from 5 to 3 feet broad; no attempt has been made to draw to scale those shown in the three house plans. On this frame is a framework of criss-cross strips of bamboo bark or *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper cords. In dry weather the father and children sleep on the floor, with possibly a reed sleeping-mat (*masni*) or a bark-cloak (*taghali*) beneath them, and a fire near by; in the rainy season they sleep on the *alpanji* platform, with a fire underneath them. At other times of year it is a convenient shelf for storing baskets and basketry materials, winnows, tools, cords, etc. Where, as in the Kurmer house illustrated, there is no *agha*, the husband may sleep on the floor of the veranda in dry weather, and in wet weather on a sleeping-mat in the *angadi*, while the wife sleeps on the floor of the *lonu*.

The *angadi* is primarily the kitchen and secondarily the sleeping room of the wife and any mature daughter. Besides one or more hearths (*o'idal*) of baked mud, roughly horseshoe shaped, or consisting of three stones, there are one or more mortar holes (*ahki*) sunk in the floor and carefully plastered with mud in which grain is pounded with the club-shaped pestle (*uspal*), and numerous pots or gourd bottles of water, supplies of leaves for leaf-plates, bamboo splinters for stitching them together and baskets of all shapes and sizes. It is taboo for mature women to sleep anywhere except on the floor, and so no *alpanji* is provided in *angadi* or *hala* room. Actually the original custom, still followed in some remote villages, seems to have been for all men to sleep in the village dormitory, or at least under their granaries, and not in the house, save in the season when they slept in the fields; for this reason the Kurmer house without any *agha* probably is an older type than the Handawada. At present, except during the season when all males are sleeping in the field houses, married men as well as bachelors sleep in the village dormitory whenever sexual continence has to be observed, e.g. from the night before the sowing of the *penda* fields till the first blades sprout, and before certain ceremonies.[a] The Hill Marias are still doubtful about the propriety of men sleeping in the house and regard the jungle or some place overshadowed by the thick leaves of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper as the right place for intercourse between man and wife; but the old prejudice is fast dying out.[1]

[1] Russell and Hiralal (article, 'Gond', III, 131-2) write:—'In one part of Bastar they have a curious rule that all males, even the married, must sleep in the common house for the eight months of the open season, while their wives sleep in their own houses. A Maria Gond thinks it impious to have sexual intercourse with his wife in his house, as it would be an insult to the

[a] [see cat. 116, p. 420. – Analyst]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

small pieces. When the Brahmin discovered it, he killed his wife and ripped open her belly in order to remove the meat and thus save her from a worse fate after death. But he found the child with one bit of beef in its mouth and the other in its hand: it cried, "It was not my mother who wanted it, but I myself" and so died.'

This story is popular and widespread. It is said that in olden days, the Maria and Muria regarded beef as taboo. But a Maria woman, like the Brahmin, developed a craving for it and ate some. When the husband was on the point of killing her, the child leapt out of the belly with a bit in its mouth and a bit in its hand crying, 'Not mother, but I'. From that day Maria and Muria have eaten beef.

FIG. 6. Uspal used for pounding tobacco or haldi
Length 1' 9"

The Muria take their regular meals, when they are at home, three times a day. At about 10 in the morning they eat boiled rice and a few leaf-cups of jawa. Jawa is the Muria's staple food. It is made of rice, mandia grain, or any of the smaller millets, exactly as the Gond and Baiga of the Central Provinces make pej. Mandia-jawa, however, has its special methods of preparation. The mandia is ground into flour and soaked in water for two days. Rice or kodon is put to boil and when half-cooked the mandia flour is added, the pot filled up with water and rice and flour are cooked together. This preparation is called *ganji*. At about 3 in the afternoon the Muria has a few leaf-cups of stale jawa, and then at 8 in the evening he again has boiled rice, this time with pulse of various kinds.

At every meal, there is chutney of tamarind, mango or mahua; any roots or vegetables available are cooked with chilli, haldi or garlic; meat, fish or eggs may be added. These delicacies vary, of course, from day to day, but the main diet rarely changes.

The Muria's kitchen is the simplest place possible. A horseshoe hearth of earth is made in a corner on the ground; half-a-dozen different earthen pots are used; there may be a wooden spoon and certainly some gourd ladles. Without increasing the cost, the standard of the cookery could be enormously improved; it has always astonished me no one has tried to improve village cookery in India.

When there is a feast, or at a marriage, most of the cooking is done out of doors and by the chelik. Long narrow trenches are dug in the ground, filled

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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FIG. 22. Iron lamp-stand placed in the centre of the marriage booth
Height 5'

In the evening, after everyone had eaten their supper, the chelik and motiari went singing to escort the bridal pair to their new house, which had been entirely deserted for their benefit. All the other people had gone away. The chelik and motiari danced before the house for some time, the newly-married pair dancing with them. Then the little boys and girls were sent away, and the seniors caught hold of the bride and groom and pushed them into the house. Here the girl stood still while the husband was taken into a small inner room. The Sirdar spread a new mat, placed a cloth on it (they sometimes put oil on it 'to make it slippery') and made him lie down on one side. Then they pulled the girl into the room and made her lie down beside him. The boys patted them farewell, and ran out shutting the door behind them.

Outside they ran to the wall of the house, trying to peep in and hear what was going on, laughing and excited. The boys ought now to have caught a cock and taken it away, plucking its feathers all along the road, to roast it in the ghotul. But the groom's old mother had been too clever for them and had hidden all her poultry.

This cock is known variously as the *lod-kor* or 'sleeping cock', *pussi-kor* or 'semen cock', *honda-kor* or 'pubic-hairs cock', *pude-kor* or 'vagina cock', and *get-kor* or 'copulation cock'. The usual custom, as we shall see at Nayanar, is to catch this cock, pluck the feathers going along the road, roast it in or near the ghotul or the ghotul camp, and then when everyone is asleep to push burnt feathers, entrails, bits of bone, into the mouths, ears, noses and private parts of the sleeping children—a joke that never fails to cause the greatest mirth and delight.

The theory seems to be that the cock is some sort of compensation. 'He is eating her vagina; we are eating the vagina cock.'

In Atungaon I was told that the ghotul leaders gave a little sermon to the husband when they shut him up with his bride. 'Take this girl; she is now your property. Give us a sleeping-cock in exchange. Sleep with the girl in happiness and joy; may she bear a child within a year; it is your duty.'

The chelik of Mumjmeta told me that where boy and girl belonged to the same ghotul, and where that ghotul was one in which boys and girls paired off in some kind of permanent relationship, they had a different custom. When the marriage was over, the bride returned to the ghotul and combed the hair and massaged the limbs of her old ghotul-husband for the last time. She slept with him for an hour, and then the chelik took her to her husband and shut them up together. The cock in this